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Contact: Megan Callahan-Grant, NOAA
(503) 231-2213

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NOAA AWARDS \$100,000 TO SUPPORT TIDAL RECONNECTION ON OREGON COAST

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) announced a grant of \$100,000 to the Midcoast Watersheds Council to restore habitat for living marine resources in Lower Drift Creek, just upstream from Alsea Bay.

This project will restore tidal flow and improve fish passage in and out of the marshes and tributaries along the creek. The large-scale estuary restoration project will take place on land recently acquired by the Siuslaw National Forest. Chinook, Coho and chum salmon, steelhead and sea-run cutthroat trout, Dover and English sole, starry flounder, Pacific herring, and Dungeness crab are expected to benefit from the project.

"The partnership among NOAA, the MidCoast and Alsea Watersheds Council, Siuslaw National Forest, the Siletz Tribes, Waldport Schools, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service demonstrates our shared commitment to restoring fisheries habitat," said retired Navy Vice Adm. Conrad C. Lautenbacher, Ph.D., under secretary of commerce for oceans and atmosphere and NOAA administrator. "These habitat restoration efforts support NOAA's goal of ecosystem-based management, and promote local stewardship of the habitats that sustain our nation's fisheries resources."

"This is an important project in a very important watershed. These marshes are rearing habitat for juvenile salmon and a variety of marine fishes. Restoring their connectivity should benefit the whole estuary as well as the Drift Creek salmon populations," said Wayne Hoffman, Midcoast Watersheds council coordinator.

Forest personnel have worked with community members to develop a restoration and management plan for the area, as well as an integrated riparian management plan for the large ranch immediately upstream.

"This is the type of project that people from a variety of interest groups can support. We are looking forward to watching the changes to this landscape over time as we allow natural processes to operate," said Karen Bennett, project manager for the Siuslaw National Forest.

The Lower Drift Creek project is being funded through an award from the NOAA Community-based Restoration Program (CRP). NOAA CRP is a financial and technical assistance program that promotes strong partnerships at the national, regional and local level to restore fisheries habitat. NOAA CRP works with organizations and government to support locally-driven habitat restoration projects in marine, estuarine and riparian areas. NOAA CRP funds on-the-ground habitat restoration projects that offer educational and social benefits for citizens and their communities, and provide long-

term ecological benefits for fishery resources. Since 1996, more than 900 projects in 26 states have been implemented using NOAA funding and leveraged funding from national and regional habitat restoration partners.

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, an agency of the U.S. Commerce Department, is dedicated to enhancing economic security and national safety through the prediction and research of weather and climate-related events and providing environmental stewardship of our nation's coastal and marine resources.

Through the emerging Global Earth Observation System of Systems (GEOSS), NOAA is working with our federal partners and nearly 60 countries to develop a global Earth observation network that is as integrated as the planet it observes, predicts and protects.

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On the Web:

NOAA: <http://www.noaa.gov>

Community-based Restoration Program: <http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/habitat/restoration>